MARVEL

388

CATES
HENRICHON

DAMNATION

DOCTOR STRANGE

STEPHEN STRANGE WAS A PREEMINENT SURGEON UNTIL A CAR ACCIDENT DAMAGED THE NERVES IN HIS HANDS. HIS EGO DROVE HIM TO SCOUR THE GLOBE FOR A MIRACLE CURE. INSTEAD, HE FOUND A MYSTERIOUS WIZARD CALLED THE ANCIENT ONE WHO TAUGHT HIM MAGIC AND THAT THERE ARE THINGS IN THIS WORLD BIGGER THAN HIMSELF. THESE LESSONS ENABLED STEPHEN TO BECOME THE SORCERER SUPREME, EARTH'S FIRST DEFENSE AGAINST ALL MANNER OF MAGICAL THREATS. HIS PATIENTS CALL HIM...

DOCTOR STRANGE

LAST TIME...

RESTORED AS SORCERER SUPREME, STEPHEN STRANGE WANTED TO MAKE AN IMPACT, BUT RESURRECTING THE CITY, AND CITIZENS, OF LAS VEGAS THAT HYDRA DESTROYED WAS A SEVERE OVERREACH. CONSEQUENTLY, MEPHISTO APPEARED IN LAS VEGAS AND STARTED IMPRISONING SOULS IN HIS HOTEL INFERNO, INCLUDING THOSE OF THOR, BLACK PANTHER, FALCON, CAPTAIN MARVEL, AND HAWKEYE. ATTEMPTING TO RECTIFY HIS ERROR OF HUBRIS, STRANGE PLAYED CARDS WITH THE DEVIL, AND LOST. MEPHISTO LOCKED HIM UP, BROKE HIS LEGS, AND MADE HIM BELIEVE CLEA, SCARLET WITCH, AND LOKI HAD COME TO RESCUE HIM. STRANGE'S BODY WAS RELEASED TO BATTLE HIS TRUE SAVIORS ON THE STRIP; HIS SOUL WENT SOMEWHERE ELSE...

THE EVENTS OF THIS ISSUE TAKE PLACE AFTER THOSE IN *DOCTOR STRANGE: DAMNATION #3.*

"BLEEDING NEON"
PART THREE

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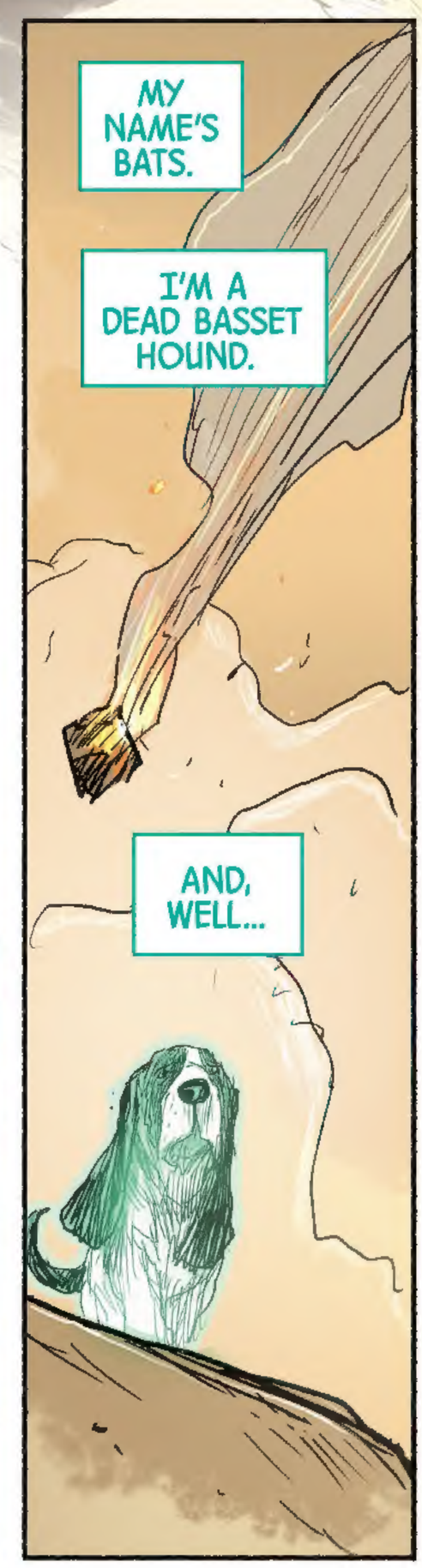
SO, YEAH, STEPHEN DECIDED TO RESURRECT VEGAS FOR... WHATEVER REASON. HERO STUFF, I RECKON.

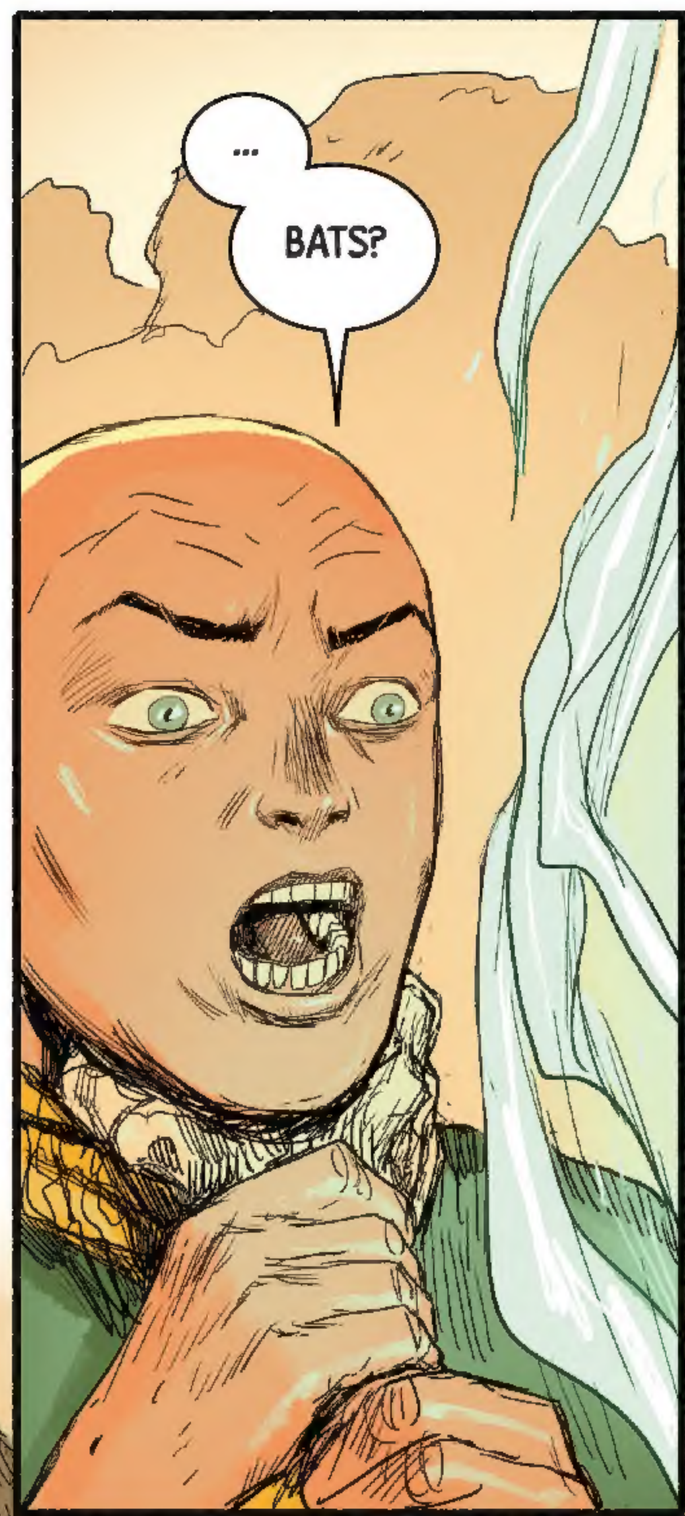
(ME PERSONALLY, I THINK HE'S TRYIN' TO IMPRESS A GIRL. BUT YOU DIDN'T HEAR THAT FROM ME.)

ANYWAY, IT WENT ALL SIDEWAYS ON HIM, BECAUSE OF COURSE IT DID, AND THE DEVIL CAME TO EARTH, AND NOW HE'S DOIN' EVIL DEVIL STUFF.

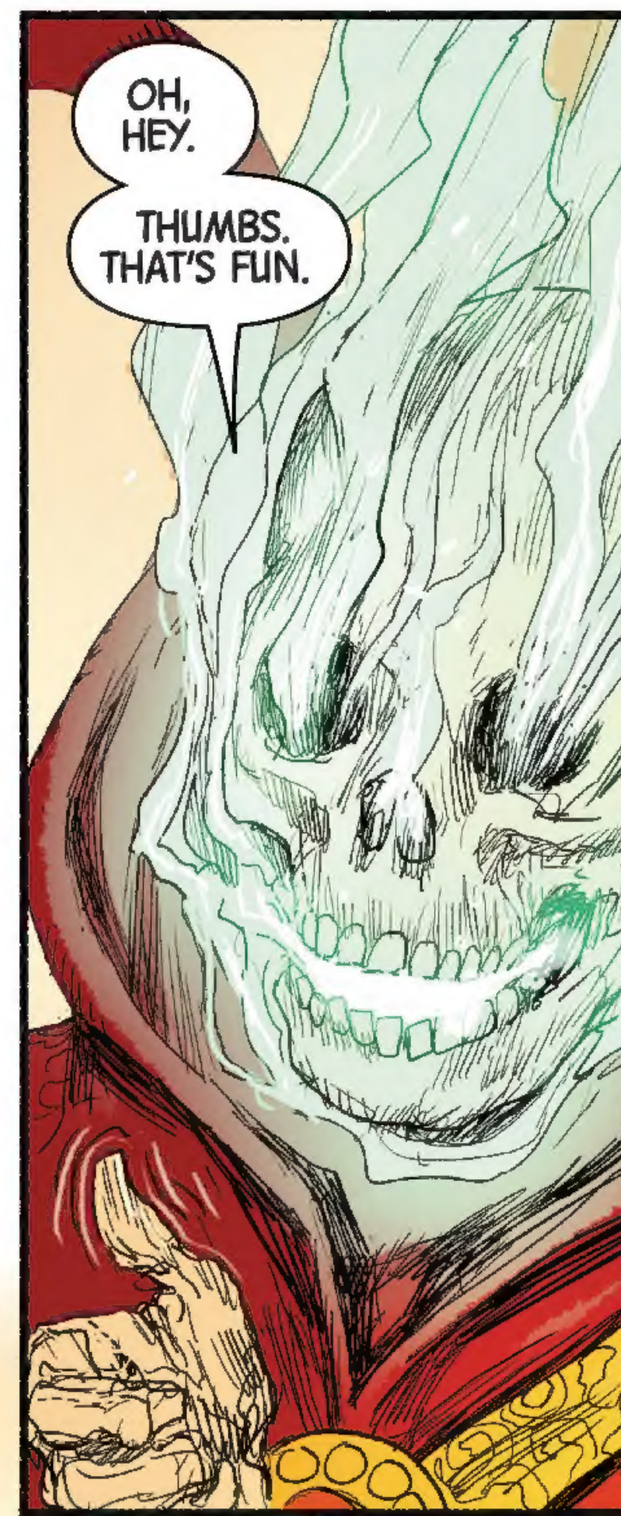
SO, *I* WENT AND GOT WONG, STEPHEN'S OLD MAGIC BUDDY, TO COME AND BAIL HIM OUT.



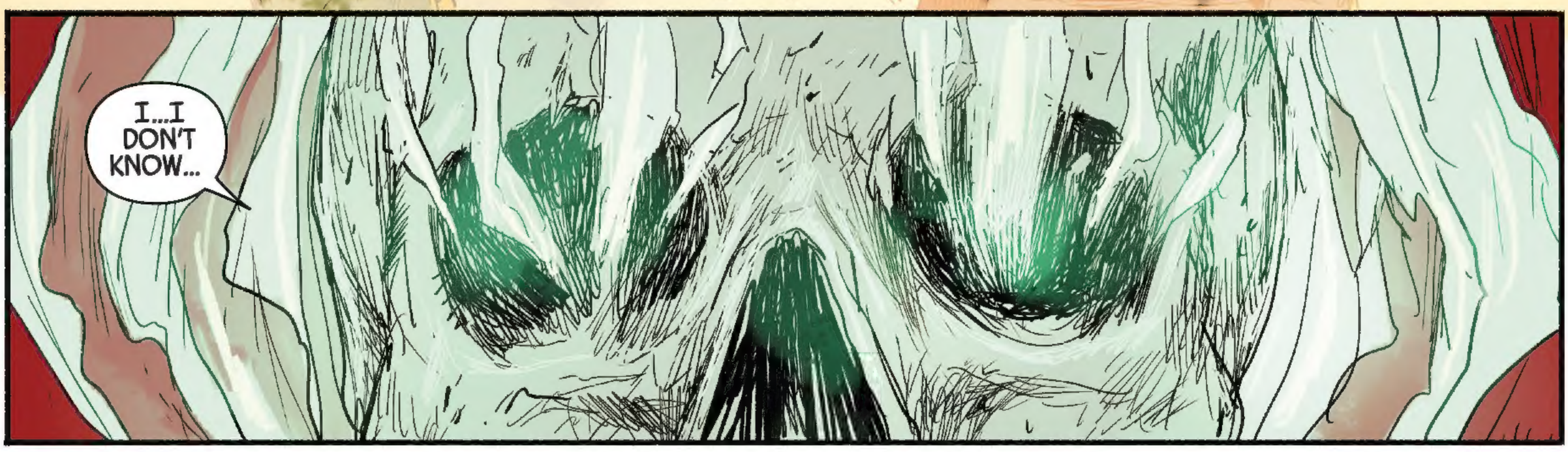
...HERE GOES NOTHIN'.
HEY, HOLY @#$%!
WOW, IT IS BANANAS IN HERE.

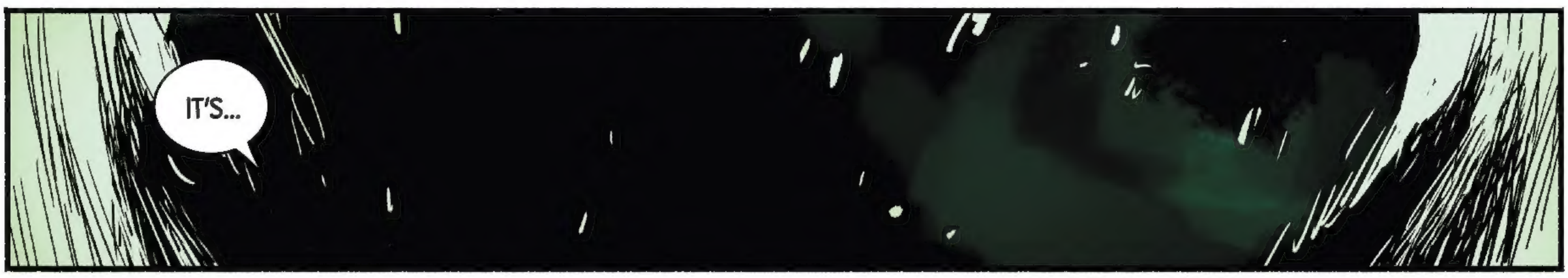

...
BATS?

YEAH, MAN. I AIN'T NEVER POSSESSED NOBODY BEFORE. BUT YOU WERE SAYING THERE WAS A VACANCY IN HERE, SO I FIGURED--


OH, HEY.
THUMBS. THAT'S FUN.

GOOD BOY, BATS!
(THAT SUDDENLY FEELS ODD.)
HOW LONG CAN YOU HOLD HIM LIKE THIS?


I...I DON'T KNOW...


IT'S...

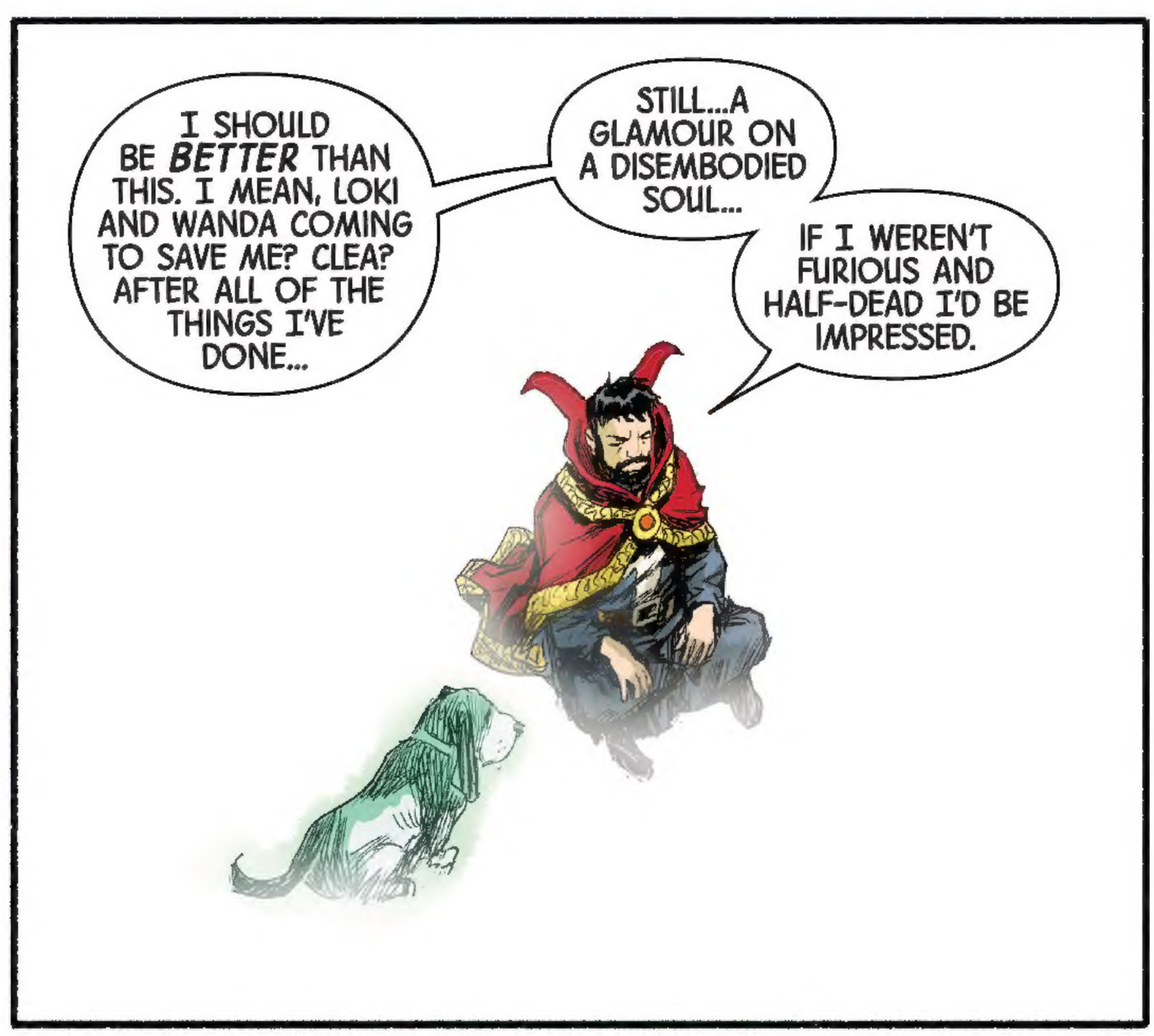
"...IT'S PRETTY BAD IN HERE."

WHAT? WHY WOULD YOU SAY SOMETHING LIKE--

...
CHUNK

OH.
I SEE.
@#$%!

DAMMIT! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN.

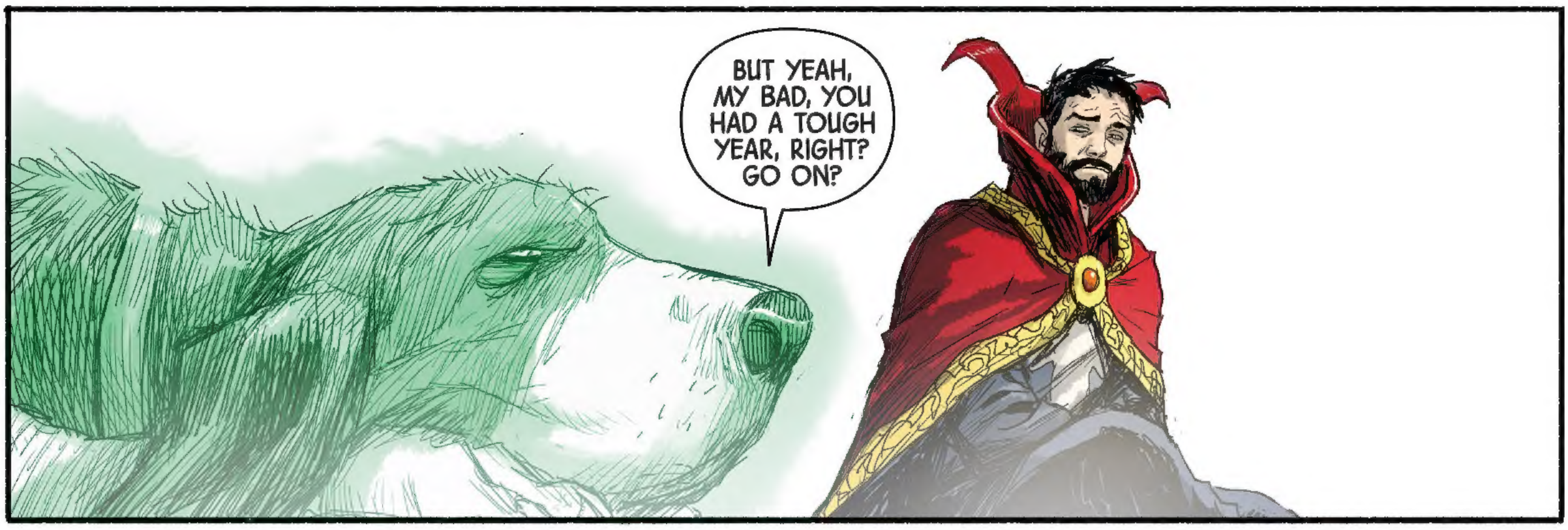

I SHOULD BE *BETTER* THAN THIS. I MEAN, LOKI AND WANDA COMING TO SAVE ME? CLEA? AFTER ALL OF THE THINGS I'VE DONE...
STILL...A GLAMOUR ON A DISEMBODIED SOUL...
IF I WEREN'T FURIOUS AND HALF-DEAD I'D BE IMPRESSED.

SO, WHAT HAPPENS NOW? HOW DOES ALLA' THIS WORK?
HONESTLY? I COULDN'T REALLY TELL YOU.
EACH POSSESSION IS A BIT DIFFERENT. WE APPEAR TO BE IN A KIND OF NETHER-REALM. A HOLDING PLACE FOR SOULS...
GREAT. KNEW I COULD COUNT ON THE SORCERER SUPREME TO EXPLAIN A MAGIC THING.
WELL, YOU AREN'T THE FIRST PERSON I'VE LET DOWN WHEN IT COMES TO--

OH, GOD... WHAT WAS IT LOKI SAID? SOMETHING ABOUT PITY PARTIES NOT WINNING WARS?
...BATS... I HAVE HAD AN EXTRAORDINARILY TERRIBLE YEAR, AND--

REALLY? 'CAUSE MY OWNER AND BEST FRIEND OF SIXTEEN YEARS HAD A HEART ATTACK AND LEFT ME ALONE IN A SHELTER!
THEN I WAS ADOPTED TWO MORE TIMES, ABANDONED AT A MAGICAL VET'S CLINIC, GOT TURNED INTO A SPY...
...AND THEN I DIED AND GOT BROUGHT BACK AS A GHOST BY AN ACTUAL GOD!

AND NOW...NOW I'M IN SOME KIND OF SOUL PRISON WITH A MOPEY MAGICIAN WHO CAN'T PULL HIS HEAD OUT OF HIS @%#$ LONG ENOUGH TO HELP HIS ACTUAL FRIENDS WHO ARE HERE TO SAVE HIM!
OH, AND I'M ALSO DOING MY LEVEL DAMN BEST TO NOT LOSE MY SANITY AS, HEY, BY THE WAY?
I'M KINDA PILOTING YOUR BODY RIGHT NOW AGAINST THE DARK FORCES OF SATAN, WHILE I'M ALSO IN HERE YELLING AT YOU!

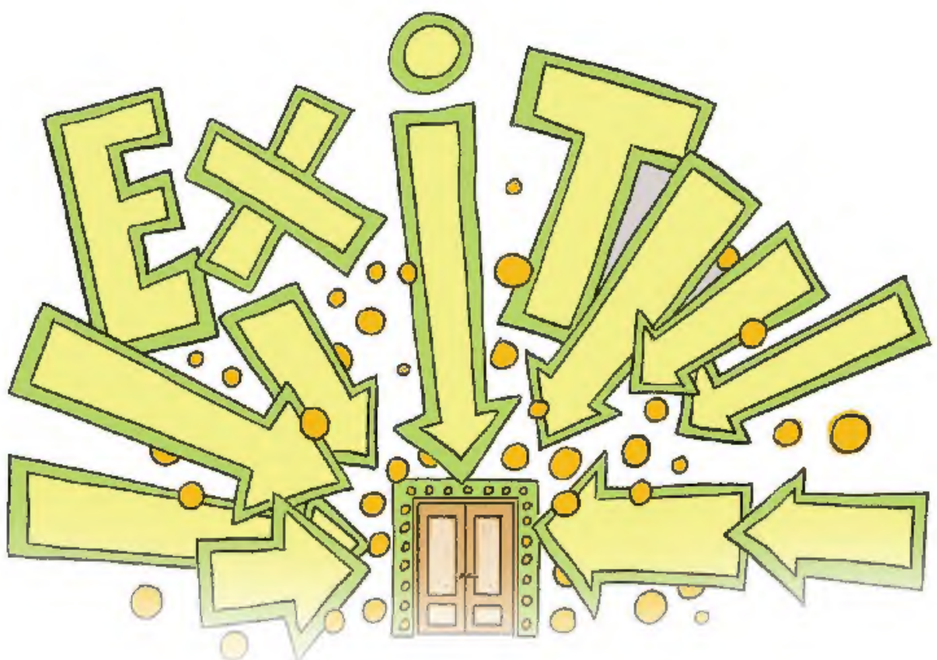

BUT YEAH, MY BAD, YOU HAD A TOUGH YEAR, RIGHT? GO ON?

I'M SORRY.
...
OKAY.

YOU WANNA GET OUT OF HERE?
YOU GOT A PLAN?

NO, BUT WHILE YOU WERE YELLING AT ME A GIANT DOOR APPEARED ON THE HORIZON WITH THE WORD "EXIT" WRITTEN IN HUGE BLINKING NEON LIGHTS.
HUH. WELL, YEAH, I GUESS THERE'S THAT...
EXIT

REAL QUICK, JUST SO WE'RE BOTH ON THE SAME PAGE...
OH, IT'S ABSOLUTELY A TRAP.
JUST MAKING SURE.


EXIT

BY THE HOARY HOSTS OF...

...OF COURSE...

YEAH, NO KIDDING. PRETTY ON-BRAND OF MEPHISTO, HUH?

W-WHAT ARE THESE PEOPLE DOING? WHAT IS THIS?
THESE ARE THE SOULS THAT MEPHISTO HAS IMPRISONED. THE SOULS OF LAS VEGAS.
VISHANTI BLESS THEM, THEY...
...THEY'RE PLAYING FOR THEIR LIVES...
BUT IT'S RIGGED, RIGHT? I MEAN, MEPHISTO AIN'T GONNA LET THEM WIN...
NO. OF COURSE NOT.
I DON'T GET IT, THEN. WHY DO THEY KEEP DOING THIS?
WE CANNOT JUDGE THOSE WHO GRASP FOR HOPE, BATS.
THOUGH CERTAINLY NAIVE, THE NEED TO FIND SOME SORT OF COMFORT OR SILVER LINING IN AN OTHERWISE HOPELESS SITUATION IS WHAT MAKES THEM--
WAIT...
CLEA!

WHO? WHAT? WHY ARE WE RUNNING?
CLEA! MY...
WONG'S "INSIDE MAN"?

SHE CAME TO HELP ME, AND HER SOUL WAS STOLEN LIKE MINE! AND NOW SHE'S--

STEPHEN, NO... WONG'S INSIDE MAN WAS THAT SPIDER-MAN WITH THE HOODIE. HE LIVES IN VEGAS?
WHAT? NO... NO, IT'S CLEA!

DOC, I WAS THERE WHEN HE MADE THE PLAN.

I'M TELLIN' YA. SHE AIN'T A PART OF THIS.

PING
DOC, DON'T! THIS IS A TRAP!!! SHE AIN'T REAL!
NO! SHE NEEDS ME, SHE--
BUHAHHH!!!
CLEAAA!!!

AH, MAN... AH, MAN...THIS IS SO MESSED UP, DOC.
EVERYTHING IS OKAY, BATS. WE'RE IN A NECROTIC SUB-REALM. I'VE BEEN TO ONE OF THESE BEFORE.
IS IT DANGEROUS?!
OH, VERY. BUT YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD.
YEAH, BUT I SEEM TO RECALL SOMETHING ABOUT THERE BEING "THINGS IN THE DARK THAT FEED ON THE DEAD"?!
I WAS JUST TRYING TO SCARE YOU.
SO, THAT AIN'T TRUE?
I DIDN'T SAY THAT. LOOK THERE!
CLEA!
DOC, I'M SERIOUS. IT'S A TRAP! SHE AIN'T--
WHOA! WHAT WAS THAT CRAZY TENTACLE THING?!
OH, NO... I THINK THAT'S...
I!
I, LORD OF THIS NOTHING REALM...
I, CONQUEROR OF MIDNIGHT AND DEVOURER-GOD OF THE ETERNAL EVER-WAS!

I, SHUMA-GORATH!!!

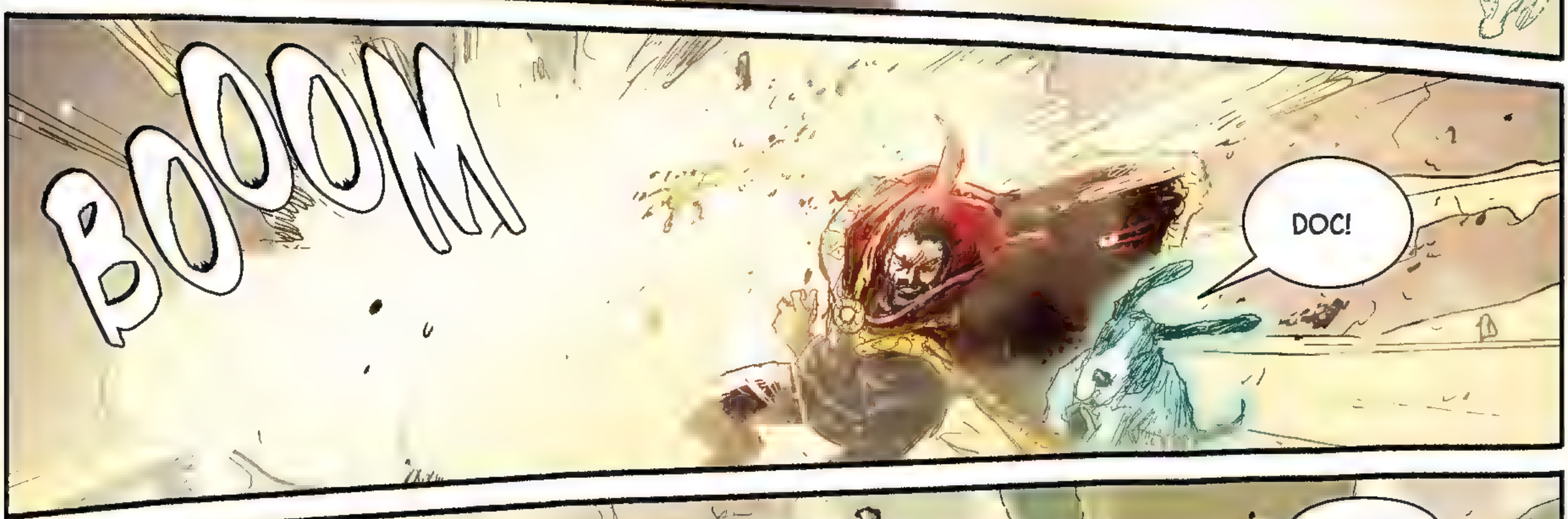
NOW BURN!

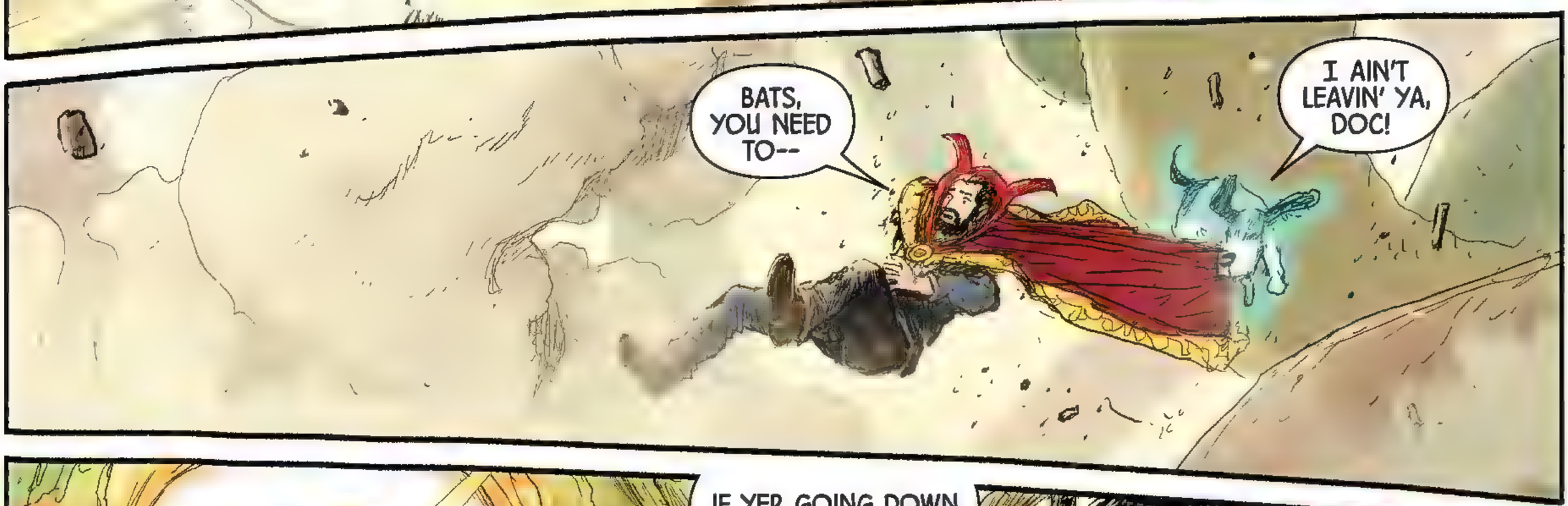
BWWAAAHHH!

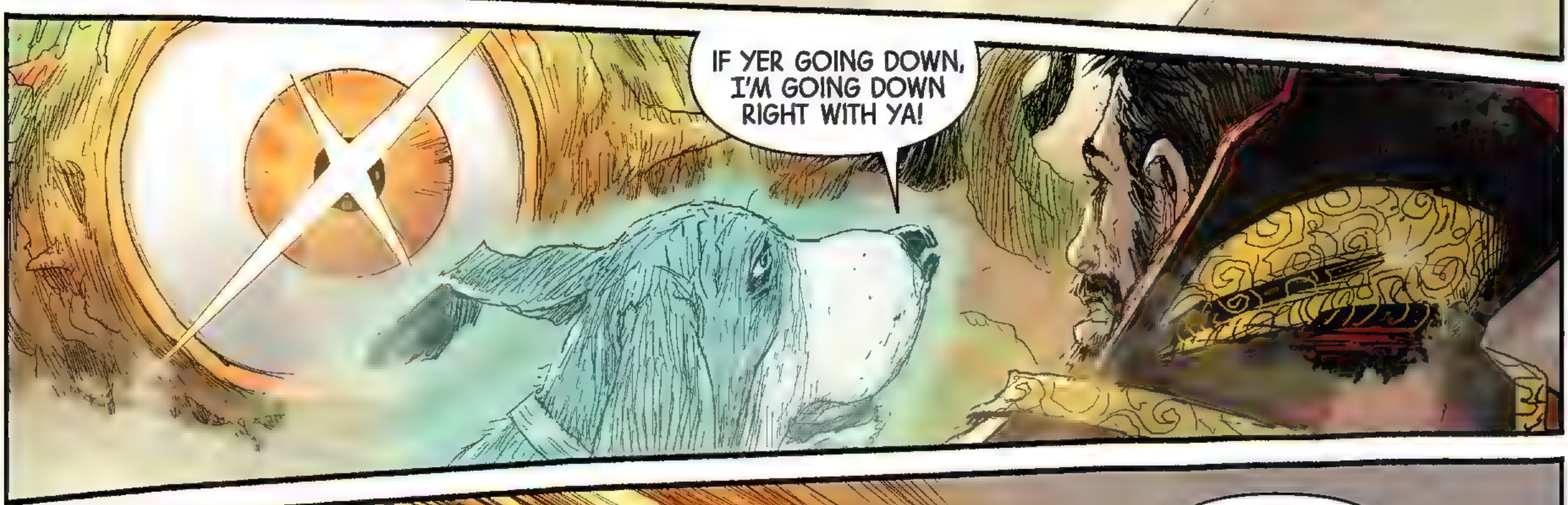
THIS...AGH! THIS DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE! GORATH DOESN'T BELONG IN...

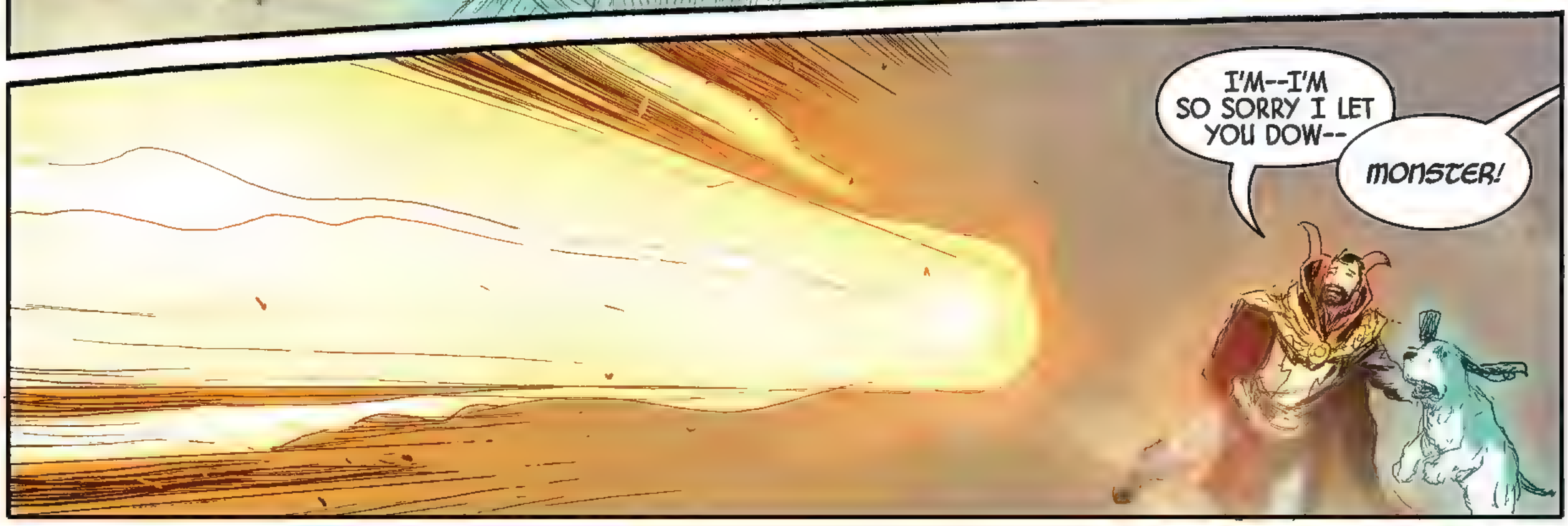
BATS...DAMMIT, THIS...AGH...NOT GOING...TO...HOLD...

RUN! BATS, PLEASE, GET OUT OF HERE. GET WONG, YOU HAVE TO SAVE CLEA...YOU HAVE TO--
AGHH!!!


BOOOM
DOC!


BATS, YOU NEED TO--
I AIN'T LEAVIN' YA, DOC!

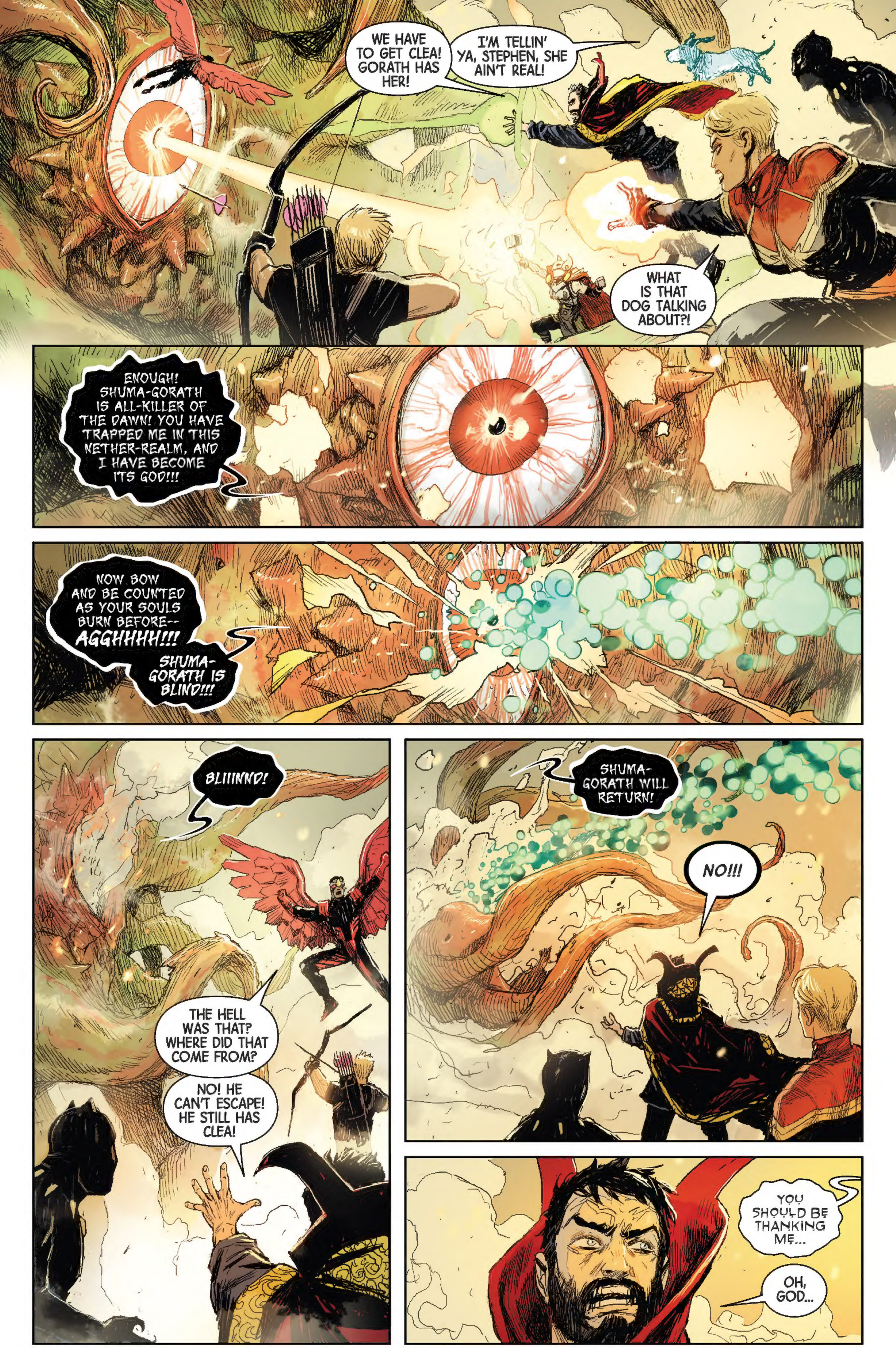

IF YER GOING DOWN, I'M GOING DOWN RIGHT WITH YA!


I'M--I'M SO SORRY I LET YOU DOW--
MONSTER!

MEANWHILE
I SAY THEE NAY!

W-WHAT?
I KNOW, SHE'S IMPRESSIVE, HUH? BUT WE KINDA NEED TO HURRY. SO, Y'KNOW...ON YOUR FEET.
SORRY. DOCTOR'S ORDERS.
JANE?!
(YES, BY ALL MEANS, THE MIGHTY THOR SHALL HANDLE THIS MONSTROSITY FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES FOR YOU ALL TO HAVE A WONDERFULLY CASUAL AND LENGTHY CONVERSATION!)
I DON'T UNDERSTAND... HOW--HOW ARE YOU HERE, AND--AND THOR...
YEAH, I KNOW, RIGHT? SEEMS WE, UH, WE ALL FELL FOR THE SAME BAIT.
WE?
THAT'S RIGHT. YOU'RE AN AVENGER, PAL...

...YOU'RE NEVER ALONE.
THERE WILL BE TIME FOR CELEBRATION AND REUNION ONCE WE KILL THIS MONSTER AND RESCUE THESE POOR SOULS, YES?
YEAH, WHAT DO YOU SAY, STRANGE?
YOU WANNA GET ROWDY WITH AN ELDER GOD IN A NECROTIC SOUL PRISON?
#$%@ YEAH.


WE HAVE TO GET CLEA! GORATH HAS HER!
I'M TELLIN' YA, STEPHEN, SHE AIN'T REAL!
WHAT IS THAT DOG TALKING ABOUT?!
ENOUGH! SHUMA-GORATH IS ALL-KILLER OF THE DAWN! YOU HAVE TRAPPED ME IN THIS NETHER-REALM, AND I HAVE BECOME ITS GOD!!!
NOW BOW AND BE COUNTED AS YOUR SOULS BURN BEFORE-- AGGHHHH!!!
SHUMA-GORATH IS BLIND!!!
BLIIINND!
THE HELL WAS THAT? WHERE DID THAT COME FROM?
NO! HE CAN'T ESCAPE! HE STILL HAS CLEA!
SHUMA-GORATH WILL RETURN!
NO!!!
YOU SHOULD BE THANKING ME...
OH, GOD...

DORMAMMU?
NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, STEPHEN...
NOW, IF YOU DON'T MIND...
WHAT DO YOU SAY WE ALL GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE?
TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT: THE END? **DOCTOR STRANGE: DAMNATION #4** & **DOCTOR STRANGE #389** ON SALE LATER THIS MONTH!

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